

Annual National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. The program honors hospitalized veterans who face unique day-to-day challenges. This is the one day of the year that the local community is asked to visit or pay special tribute to our hospitalized veterans. If friends and relatives can't visit hospitalized veterans today, I hope they will call them.

In connection with this special program, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a project that has been underway for some time to provide patient bedside telephones—what most people consider a necessity—in VA medical centers. Anyone who has ever been a patient in a hospital or visited someone in a hospital knows that communicating with friends and family can be a very healing medication.

The Communication Workers of America, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the Pioneers of Telecommunications are donating their labor to complete many of the telephone projects now in progress. Mr. Frank Dosio heads the project and calls it PT Phone Home. The project is a cooperative effort among local telephone companies, telecommunications unions, PT Phone Home and the VA. The entire VA inpatient hospital system should have bedside phone service no later than December 1996.

VA facilities have office and operation telephone systems, however, telephone communication for patients was only available at a limited number of pay telephones in the hospitals. The expense of installing room telephones was a determining factor in not making in-room telephones available. With limited resources, the VA opted to focus on quality equipment, staff, and facilities and had to defer availability of private local telephones for patients. In recent years, the goal has been to make telephones available as new facilities were constructed.

The massive undertaking of making telephones available to more veterans who are patients now requires a considerable amount of planning and financing. One of the most important features about the current and comprehensive project, among others, is the help that is being provided by the local telecommunications labor force in the places where the VA facilities are located. The communications workers have donated valuable labor on their weekends and days off. And some communities have conducted local fund raisers for these worthwhile installations. These contributions say volumes about the goodwill our citizens and communities have for veterans.

Many of these veterans have spouses who cannot travel to the hospital. The telephone is, in many cases, the only means of finding out the condition and feelings of their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend everyone who has been involved in this project, especially the leadership of Frank Dosio and those who have assisted him. I have heard nothing but favorable comments from veteran patients throughout the country, and I urge Secretary Brown to make certain that every hospital in the VA system has bedside telephone service as soon as possible.

TRIBUTE TO PETTY OFFICER OSCAR GOMEZ

HON. RONALD D. COLEMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to Petty Officer Oscar Gomez who has been recognized as the Nation's Navy Reserve Enlisted Recruiter of the Year.

Petty Officer Gomez has spent 10 of his 13 years on active duty with the Navy. He set a goal of 46 recruits at the beginning of fiscal year 1994 and achieved 167 percent of that goal by signing up 77 recruits. Gomez will be promoted to Petty Officer 1st Class in El Paso. The El Paso recruiting office can claim both the country's top recruiter and the Nation's top recruiting office for the past several years.

This achievement is especially remarkable in light of the fact that El Paso is a landlocked city in the middle of the southwest desert.

Mr. Speaker, Oscar Gomez is an outstanding citizen and a national treasure, and I am privileged to count him as one of my constituents. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Petty Officer Oscar Gomez for his efforts and tireless service to our Nation and saluting him in this milestone in his professional career.

IN RECOGNITION OF MANOLO REYES

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to join with thousands of my constituents and recognize Dr. Manolo Reyes for over a half century of public service in this country and in his native Cuba.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, Manolo Reyes had a street in Miami named in his honor in recognition of decades of leadership in south Florida. Manolo Reyes earned a law degree in Cuba and was a successful figure on Cuban television. With the establishment of the Castro dictatorship, he joined thousands of his fellow Cubans in a life of exile.

In Miami, he became the face of the exile community for an entire generation of Cubans and non-Cubans alike, as the first Hispanic television news anchor in the United States. Those of us who grew up watching his morning newscast remember his dignified and authoritative delivery of the day's events. For his ground breaking work in television journalism Manolo Reyes received an Emmy.

After earning a second law degree in the United States, Manolo entered a second career in the health care field. Since 1987, he has worked at Mercy Hospital overseeing patient and governmental activities.

In addition to all this, Dr. Reyes founded the Saint John Bosco Clinic which helps care for those who would otherwise fall through the cracks in the health care system. He has been quoted as saying "next to my family, this clinic is the most precious act of love in my life."

To Manolo Reyes and his family, I offer my congratulations on the recognition of a lifetime of achievement and best wishes for many more years of success.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAW ENFORCEMENT BLOCK GRANTS ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE C. LATOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 13, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 728) to control crime by providing law enforcement block grants.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Chairman, just a few days prior to the last election, in Wickliffe, OH, a man armed with a shotgun went into a middle school and began firing indiscriminately. Tragically, a long-time school employee lay dead at the conclusion of this rampage, others were wounded, and the psychological terror visited upon the staff and students has yet to be quantified.

The police response time was excellent, the police work was excellent, and now the issue of the gunman's guilt or innocence will be left up to the judicial system.

In the last week, Wickliffe qualified for and received a 3 year grant under the Cops Fast Program to place an additional police officer on the street. Everyone connected with law enforcement recognizes that more police officers on the street is a good thing. However, 10 new police officers would have done nothing to prevent the tragedy last November in Wickliffe.

The good news is that the block grant program now under debate in this House will keep in place the additional police officer received by Wickliffe and any other locality that has received funding under the provisions passed in last year's crime bill. The better news is that the Republican block grant program will give to Wickliffe and other cities the flexibility to engage in school security measures that may have a preventive impact upon future tragedies.

Local communities will have the option of applying for and receiving funds to acquire metal detectors, security guards and/or security cameras and systems for their schools if those local communities feel that that is one of the more pressing needs to fight crime in their communities. No longer will they be subject to a one size fits all solution and be required to buy off-the-rack crime prevention. Instead, they will be able to employ a tailor-made, local solution to their most pressing needs. As with many of the provisions in this year's crime bill debate, this solution just makes sense in the daily battle against crime.

REPRESENTATIVE TORRICELLI— PERSPECTIVE ON NATO EXPANSION

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, last week the Los Angeles Times ran an excellent article by